

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-3, 6, 9, 10, 14 and 17 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

Claims 1-18 are pending.

The Examiner required that the claim status identifier for claim 10 be corrected. In the previous response, the identifier should have been "currently amended." Because the Examiner appears to have examined claim 10 as amended in the outstanding Office Action, and claim 10 is not amended in the present response, the identifier for claim 10 reads "previously presented" in the present response.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Buell (U.S. Patent No. 5,197,959). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Independent claim 1 is directed to an interlabial pad and amended to recite that "the absorbent body [has] one or a plurality of bending elements including a slit formed on a surface of the absorbent body," that the coating material maintains "an effect of the bending elements," and that the "surface of the coating material is not provided with the slit-like processing."

The Examiner asserts that "Buell teaches the flexure hinges 23A,B,C that are comprised of slits as can be seen in Figs. 8, 9, 17 and 29." The flexure hinges in Buell are provided on the deformation element. The deformation element is more rigid than the absorbent core and can be

